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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CHISINAU 000283

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [RO](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: JOINT DECLARATION 2-PLUS-1: MISTAKES WERE  
MADE

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Ref A: Chisinau 216

11. (C) Summary: Minister for Reintegration Vasile Sova and former Presidential Advisor Marc Tkaciuk called on Ambassador on March 24, upon instructions from President Voronin, to provide further explanation about the March 18 2-plus-1 meeting and the Joint Declaration. It is not patently clear to the Moldovans that the document was a mistake. While in Moscow, Voronin had accepted Smirnov's invitation to meet in Tiraspol on March 25. Sova and Tkaciuk informed us of their intention to announce that Voronin would not participate. According to Sova and Tkaciuk, Voronin was so outraged by Smirnov's statement earlier that day announcing a travel ban against the U.S. and EU ambassadors that he would not meet again with Smirnov until the ban was lifted. End Summary.

No Voronin-Smirnov Meeting March 25  
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12. (C) Though Voronin had formally accepted Smirnov's invitation to meet in Tiraspol in a 1-plus-1 format on March 25, Sova and Tkaciuk informed us that this meeting would not take place. The GOM was so outraged by Smirnov's "counter-productive" press statement on March 24 announcing a travel ban against Ambassador Chaudhry, EU Special Representative Kalman Miszei, and Czech Ambassador Petr Kypr (because he holds the EU chairmanship), that Voronin felt it would not be possible to meet with Smirnov, lest this appear as a form of agreement with him. GOM officials were particularly outraged by Smirnov's linking his statement to the March 18 declaration, thus giving the impression that Smirnov felt he did not have to let the EU and U.S. representatives into Transnistria. The Moldovan interpretation was that Smirnov wanted to aggressively use the travel ban to kill prospects for a 5-plus-2, by showing he could even keep U.S. and EU negotiators out of his "country." Tkaciuk and Sova said that no meeting with Smirnov could take place unless all participants could move freely in that part of Moldova.

13. (C) Sova and Tkaciuk informed us in advance of their intention to announce that, as a result of the destabilizing statements by Smirnov, the GOM was no longer interested in participating in the previously agreed-upon March 25 meeting. Sova and Tkaciuk said that they wanted to consult with the U.S. Ambassador before issuing the statement.

They had already spoken with Kalman Miszei who had responded that Solana's office supported such a Moldovan statement. The Moldovan officials wanted to know if the USG supported this approach, and the Ambassador answered that indeed we did.

#### Joint Declaration was a Mistake

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14. (C) Sova and Tkaciuk said that President Voronin had specifically told them to meet with the American Ambassador, listen to USG concerns and give us a factual description of what actually happened in Moscow. To allay concerns about lack of transparency, they explained that as late as Friday, March 13, the GOM side was almost certain that there would be no 2-plus-1 meeting at all. In fact, they were so sure that Presidential Advisor Stati called in the Russian Ambassador to tell him that the GOM proposed postponing the meeting until after elections. However, the next day, on Saturday the 14th, Russian President Medvedev personally called Voronin to urge him to participate. Medvedev said that the Russians would accept any Moldovan starting position. When President Voronin went to Moscow, there was no draft statement. However, according to Sova and Tkaciuk, they had talked about the principles -- territorial integrity, holding a 5-plus-2 to discuss Transnistria (TN) status issues, demilitarization and confidence building measures.

CHISINAU 00000283 002 OF 003

15. (C) The Ambassador went through the main USG concerns on the Joint Declaration (drawing on previous talking points), citing lack of trust created, no mention of territorial integrity, and in particular, the setback on peacekeeping forces that point 4 represented. Sova and Tkaciuk admitted that these criticisms were valid, and agreed that the statement was a mistake. They said they had the same concerns.

16. (C) By way of explanation they noted that Sova was in the hospital, and Tkaciuk had remained in Chisinau -- hence Voronin went off to Moscow without his key experts. Before the president's departure, they agreed that Tkaciuk would be available at all times by telephone, and Voronin promised to call. Tkaciuk said that the only call he received from Stati (who had accompanied Voronin) was after the agreement was signed to read it to him.

17. (C) As far back as a year ago, they noted, the GOM had been concerned that the Russians would give them a draft statement just before the elections. After Russia's negative intervention in the 2005 elections, Voronin had decided to go to Moscow now so that it would not be possible to accuse him of not taking a Transnistria settlement seriously.

18. (C) Unfortunately, Sova and Mark felt that since they, the two best experts on TN issues (by their own modest assessment), did not go to Moscow with the president, the end result was unacceptable. They agreed that they had learned their lesson, acknowledged that they may have lost our trust, but were ready to work together, to move forward, recognizing that there was no other format but the 5-plus-2. Until the president went to Moscow, the GOM had believed that a 2-plus-1 would be only consultations. The Joint Declaration had turned the meeting into

negotiations which, they said, was never their intention.

Next Step: Use the Declaration to Move Forward

19. (C) Now that the declaration was signed, Tkaciuk argued that it was important to use it to unite the efforts of 5-plus-2 participants to push for a substantive 5-plus-2 meeting. Sova said the GOM would immediately ask all 5-plus-2 partners to support holding a substantive 5-plus-2. He mentioned the upcoming 3-plus-2 in Vienna on April 8, which they hoped would prepare the dates for a 5-plus-2 meeting. According to the Joint Declaration, a 5-plus-2 meeting should take place before the end of June. The Ambassador agreed on the need to hold everyone to that part of the declaration, and responded that of course the USG would support such a push.

110. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question about the declaration's Point 4 allowing the peacekeeping forces to remain, Sova responded that the declaration would not impede resumption of the withdrawal of Russian troops. The presence of the peacekeeping forces related to the 1992 ceasefire agreement, noted Sova. That agreement had no expiration date on it. The Ambassador suggested an additional point: bringing in the OSCE to start discussions on military issues and the transformation of the peacekeeping force to an OSCE force. Tkaciuk responded that the GOM had put some details on paper two months ago, and promised a detailed discussion to address the military issues in the near future.

Comment

111. (C) By now it is clear to us that the GOM understands that signing the 2-plus-1 Joint Declaration was a mistake. We have heard that President Voronin was so upset with advisor Stati over this blunder that he wanted to fire him, and only refrained as the public scandal would compound the mistake. No doubt as a result, Tkaciuk said that Voronin had personally asked him

CHISINAU 00000283 003 OF 003

to take responsibility for Transnistria issues again, and hence the joint Tkaciuk and Sova visit.

CHAUDHRY